

**Testimony in Support of
HB 416 - Public Schools -
Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings - Requirements**

TO: Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair and Members of the Ways and Means Committee.

FROM: Ashley Egan, Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland
Coordinator

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I am the Coordinator of the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland. I live in Prince George's County Maryland. I am asking you to support **HB 416 - Public Schools - Active Shooter Safety Drills or Trainings - Requirements**. My kids have attended public school since my oldest started pre-k at Avalon Elementary School in 2009. She is now attending her freshman year at St. Mary's College in St. Mary's Maryland.

I still remember the day of her first active shooter drill, because she came home and told me all about it. She told me about how the code words were "Dr. Bruce lost her blue notebook." She then practiced with her two siblings for the next two weeks, just to be prepared.

That drill terrified her.

Since then, all my children have participated in many active shooter drills, as well as many situations where the school was in lockdown because of criminal activity in the area. They have discussed which one of them will sacrifice themselves to the shooter so that the others might live. They have sat in dark coat rooms and bathrooms and had to think about what windows might betray their spot. It is a macabre and deadly version of hide and seek that they have had to perform multiple times a year for decades, and they are good at it.

They say it is just like a fire-drill, but is it?

As a mother, I can't even begin to understand what they are going through, the Columbine High School Shooting was two years after I graduated from college. My children were shocked that I didn't have active shooter drills when I was in school. They hadn't been invented yet!

I am asking you to pass this bill, to study the effects of these drills on our kids and to provide them support to make it through the trauma that we are inflicting on them. This bill is a huge step in protecting our children. Please pass it.

Ashley Egan

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